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Statistical Commission

Report on the thirty-first session (29 February-3 March 2000)

Economic and Social Council
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Note

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of capital letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.

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Summary

At its thirty-first session, the Statistical Commission adopted the draft methodological references to the tourism satellite account subject to the draft being amended in specific agreed ways, in particular to include the list of tourism-specific products from the draft update of the United Nations/World Tourism Organization recommendations on tourism statistics.

In following up the coordination of development indicators in the context of follow-up to United Nations conferences and summits, including capacity-building, the Commission:

(a) Reiterated the need to lessen the reporting burden of countries by reducing the number of data requests sent by international organizations;

(b) Stressed the importance of coordination among and also within international organizations and of statistical capacity-building, noting, in this context, the launching of the PARIS 21 initiative;

(c) Expressed support for the Economic Commission for Europe initiative to strengthen capacity-building in social statistics in connection with the forthcoming special session of the General Assembly on the five-year review of the World Summit for Social Development, to be held at Geneva in 2000.

The Commission reviewed the ongoing work that groups of countries and international organizations are undertaking in various fields of economic, social and environment statistics. In particular, the Commission:

(a) Made detailed recommendations for the contents of the compilers manual for international merchandise trade statistics;

(b) Gave a number of directions concerning the milestone assessment of the implementation of the System of National Accounts, 1993 (1993 SNA), requested the Intersecretariat Working Group on National Accounts (ISWGNA) to consider a number of specific issues at its meeting in April 2000, endorsed the creation of a group of friends of the Chair and invited the high-level group and the technical group of ISWGNA to report the results of their deliberations to this group (of friends of the Chair);

(c) Welcomed the progress that had been made in the areas of household income statistics, informal sector statistics, capital stock statistics, price statistics, labour and compensation, business survey frames, services statistics, intangibles, social statistics, the measurement of paid and unpaid work, poverty statistics and environment statistics, and gave specific directions in several of these areas, in particular regarding the content of the International Labour Organization *Manual on Consumer Price Indices*, the process of revision of the System of Integrated Environmental and Economic Accounting, and the schedule for completing the *Handbook on Integrated Environmental and Economic Accounting*;

(d) Recommended that the start of the next round of the global International Comparison Programme be postponed by at least one year so that a number of steps specified by the Commission could be taken, and empowered the Chairman to constitute a group of friends to review the implementation plan and to report back no later than at the next meeting of the Commission.

The Commission endorsed the recommendations for future work on the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities that had been made by the Expert Group on International Economic and Social Classifications, and provided some specific directions for this work.

With regard to the Special Data Dissemination Standard (SDDS) and the General Data Dissemination System of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Commission:

(a) Urged IMF to reinforce the effective partnerships between statistical agencies, central banks and ministries of finance that had been formed as a result of the data standards initiative;

(b) Expressed concern about the planned extension of SDDS, stating that there is an opportunity cost in terms of the further development of other data systems, and stressing the need for priorities and a certain degree of flexibility when implementing the standards;

(c) Requested IMF, when reviewing SDDS in future, to take into account the outcomes of the data quality debate that IMF had stimulated.

The Commission took note of the progress made in the global integrated presentation of the work of the international organizations in statistical methodology, and considered that the results of this work would be very useful to a spectrum of users and in developing a multi-year programme of work for the Statistical Commission.

The Commission considered an agenda item entitled: "United Nations Development Programme *Human Development Report*" and adopted the following text:

> "Without being able to directly verify the findings of Ian Castles of Australia during its thirty-first session, the Statistical Commission took note of his report on the *Human Development Report*. The Commission is very concerned to ensure that the *Report* is based on valid statistical evidence. The Commission, therefore, requests its Chairman to appoint a small group of statistical experts to prepare, in conjunction with the United Nations Development Programme, a report on the accuracy of the statistical information in the *Report*, focusing on the points raised by the room document authored by Mr. Castles. The Group should report to the Bureau not later than June 2000. The Commission authorizes the Bureau to take whatever follow-up steps it deems necessary."

In relation to the planned work of the United Nations Statistics Division, the Commission took note of the draft medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005, the work programme for the biennium 2000-2001, the proposed schedule of expert groups and workshops to be held in 2000 and 2001, and the activities to be undertaken under the Development Account in 2000 and 2001.

The Commission considered the follow-up to the agreed conclusions of the Economic and Social Council's high-level and coordination segments and to its resolutions of 1999, and brought to the attention of the Council a number of actions that had been taken or were planned consistent with the Council's requests, in particular the development of a multi-year programme of work for the Commission covering the period 2000-2003.

Contents

Chapter		*Paragraphs*	*Page*
I.	Matters calling for action by the Economic and Social Council or brought to its attention	1–2	1
	A. Draft decision	1	1
	B. Matters brought to the attention of the Council	2	2
II.	Economic statistics	3–16	3
	A. National accounts	3–4	3
	B. International trade statistics	5–6	4
	C. Service statistics	7–8	4
	D. Finance statistics	9–10	5
	E. Economic statistics: International Comparison Programme	11–12	5
	F. Special Data Dissemination Standard and General Data Dissemination system of the International Monetary Fund, including data quality	13–14	6
	G. Other economic statistics (city groups on economic statistics and Intersecretariat Working Group on Price Statistics)	15–16	7
III.	Tourism satellite account	17–18	9
IV.	Environment statistics	19–20	11
V.	Demographic, social and migration statistics	21–26	12
	A. Gender issues in measurement of paid and unpaid work	21–22	12
	B. Social statistics	23–24	12
	C. Measurement of human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome	25–26	12
VI.	Coordination of development indicators in the context of the follow-up to United Nations conferences and summits, including capacity-building	27–28	13
VII.	International economic and social classifications	29–30	15
VIII.	Revised Handbook of Statistical Organization	31–32	16
IX.	Review of other major developments in the work programme of the United Nations Statistics Division	33–34	17
X.	Coordination and integration of international statistical programmes	35–36	18
XI.	Follow-up to the agreed conclusions of the Economic and Social Council's high-level and coordination segments, and to its resolutions	37–38	19
XII.	Programme questions and related matters	39	21
XIII.	United Nations Development Programme Human Development Report	40–42	22
XIV.	Provisional agenda and dates for the thirty-second session of the Commission	43–45	23

XV. Adoption of the report of the Commission on its thirty-first session 46–47 24

XVI. Organization of the session 48–54 25

A. Opening and duration of the session 48–49 25

B. Attendance 50 25

C. Election of officers 51 25

D. Agenda and organization of work 52–53 25

E. Documentation 54 26

Annexes

I. Attendance 27

II. List of documents 29

Chapter I

Matters calling for action by the Economic and Social Council or brought to its attention

A. Draft decision

1. The Statistical Commission recommends to the Economic and Social Council the adoption of the following draft decision:

Report of the Statistical Commission on its thirty-first session and provisional agenda and documentation for the thirty-second session of the Statistical Commission

The Economic and Social Council:

(a) Takes note of the report of the Statistical Commission on its thirty-first session;

(b) Decides that the thirty-second session of the Commission shall be held in New York from 6-9 March 2001;

(c) Approves the provisional agenda and documentation for the thirty-second session of the Commission as set out below.

Provisional agenda and documentation for the thirty-second session of the Statistical Commission

1. Election of officers.

2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.

   Documentation

   Provisional agenda and annotations

   Note by the Secretariat on the organization of the work of the session

   Note by the Secretariat on the state of preparation of documentation for the session

3. Demographic and social statistics:

   (a) Gender issues;

   (b) Social statistics;

   (c) Labour statistics supplement to the tourism satellite account;

   (d) Human settlements statistics.

4. Economic statistics:

   (a) National accounts;

   (b) Statistics of international trade in services;

(c) International Comparison Programme;

(d) Other economic statistics (city groups and intersecretariat groups):

(i) Capital stock statistics;

(ii) Price indexes/price statistics.

5. Environment statistics and environmental accounting.

6. Development indicators.

7. International economic and social classifications.

8. Review of other major developments in the work programme of the United Nations Statistics Division.

9. Coordination and integration of international statistical programmes.

Documentation

Report of the Administrative Committee on Coordination Subcommittee on Statistical Activities on its thirty-fourth (2000) session

10. Follow-up to the agreed conclusions of the Economic and Social Council's high level and coordination segments, and to its resolutions.

11. Programme questions and related matters.

Documentation

Draft programme of work of the United Nations Statistics Division for the biennium 2002-2003

12. Methodological development.

13. Statistical analysis.

14. Information technology (e-commerce) and statistics.

15. Handbook of statistical organization.

16. Technical cooperation.

17. Provisional agenda for the thirty-third session of the Commission.

18. Report of the Commission on its thirty-second session.

B. Matters brought to the attention of the Council

2. The attention of the Council is drawn to the decisions and recommendations of the Commission (see paras. 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24, 28, 30, 32, 34, 36, 38, 42, 45 and 47).

Chapter II
Economic statistics

A. National accounts

3. The Commission considered item 3 (a) of its agenda at its 498th meeting, on 29 February 2000. It had before it the following documents:

(a) Note by the Secretary-General transmitting report of the Task Force on National Accounts (E/CN.3/2000/2);

(b) Report of the Secretary-General on the milestone assessment of the implementation of the System of National Accounts, 1993, (1993 SNA) by member States (E/CN.3/2000/3);

(c) A background document containing the minutes of a meeting of the Intersecretariat Working Group on National Accounts (ISWGNA), Washington, D.C., 15 and 16 April 1999;

(d) A background document containing the minutes of a meeting of the Intersecretariat Working Group on National Accounts, Paris, 16 and 17 September 1999;

(e) A background document on progress in the implementation of the 1993 SNA in Latin America and the Caribbean, 1998-1999 (available in Spanish only).

Actions taken by the Commission

4. The Commission:

(a) While recognizing that the milestone analysis based on the full implementation of the 1993 SNA provided useful information, emphasized that additional information, such as evaluation of timeliness, periodicity, direct measurement and conceptual adherence, should be taken into account in the analysis. The current analysis indicated a lack of progress in the implementation for a large number of countries that needed to be addressed;

(b) Requested the high-level group of ISWGNA to reconsider if the current definition of implementation of the 1993 SNA is suitable for all countries. ISWGNA should attempt to determine whether a core set of accounts could be defined;

(c) Requested ISWGNA to consider the items discussed by the members of the Statistical Commission at its meeting in April 2000, *inter alia*, future work on gross domestic product volume measures and the link between national accounts data and employment. Regarding the mechanism for updating the 1993 SNA, ISWGNA should also discuss the frequency of updates;

(d) Endorsed the creation of a group of friends of the Chair to include Australia, Botswana, Hungary, India, Peru and the United States of America. The high-level group and the technical group of ISWGNA were invited to report the results of their deliberations to this group;

(e) Recognized the usefulness of the electronic discussion groups and encouraged the participation of more countries;

(f) Requested ISWGNA to continue to give special attention in their working programmes to the needs of the countries at milestone levels 0 and 1;

(g) Welcomed the Statistics Netherlands initiative to host a workshop on gross domestic product (GDP) volume and price measurement, in cooperation with the Statistical Office of the European Communities (Eurostat).

B. International trade statistics

5. The Commission considered item 3 (b) of its agenda at its 499th meeting, on 29 February 2000. It had before it a note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Task Force on International Trade Statistics (E/CN.3/2000/4).

Action taken by the Commission

6. The Commission:

(a) Restated its request that the treatment of electronic commerce in international trade statistics be clarified, particularly in terms of defining its coverage and methods of data collection. The Commission noted that the issue would be addressed at the next meeting of the Task Force and in the compilers manual which was being prepared;

(b) Welcomed the data set of international trade statistics according to the Central Product Classification (CPC) produced on a CD-ROM by the United Nations Statistics Division for test use by economists and statisticians, and requested the Division to report back to the Commission on the reaction of users as part of a review of the usefulness of Central Product Classification data for analytical purposes;

(c) Expressed concern that the liberalization of trade and the consequent reduced incentive to secure accurate records of trade transactions could impact negatively on the quality of international trade statistics. The Commission requested the Task Force to address this issue, to consider the alternative sources of international trade statistics to supplement the customs-based data, and to reflect the outcomes in the compilers manual.

C. Service statistics

7. The Commission considered item 3 (c) of its agenda at its 499th meeting, on 29 February 2000. It had before it the following documents:

(a) Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Task Force on Statistics of International Trade in Services (E/CN.3/2000/5);

(b) Background document on the overview of the manual on statistics of international trade in services (attachment to letters sent by the United Nations Statistics Division and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) as part of the worldwide review of the draft manual);

(c) Background document on the tenth meeting of the Inter-agency Task Force on Statistics of International Trade in Services, (Washington, D.C., 8 to 10 February 2000).

Action taken by the Commission

8. The Commission:

(a) Welcomed the work on the manual and stated that work had progressed substantially since the last session of the Commission and provided a useful framework for guiding future work in this new area of statistics;

(b) Noted that the Extended Balance of Payments Classification of Services required more detail than that which most statistical offices could currently provide, and that it also required careful consideration of the way in which resident and non-resident definitions were utilized in the description of services traded;

(c) Further noted that the purpose of the manual was to provide a conceptual framework that describes the Extended Balance of Payments Classification of Services detail beyond that which countries might be able to provide, and that in practice trade in services data might be collected by national offices at a more aggregated level.

D. Finance statistics

9. The Commission considered item 3 (d) of its agenda at its 499th meeting on 29 February 2000. It had before it a note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Task Force on Finance Statistics (E/CN.3/2000/6).

Action taken by the Commission

10. The Commission:

(a) Supported the work being undertaken by the Task Force, in particular the work on further developing creditor-side data;

(b) Noted that obtaining quality data from financial institutions was essential for that work and that implementing disclosure standards might be an important prerequisite.

E. Economic statistics: International Comparison Programme

11. The Commission considered item 3 (e) of its agenda at its 499th, 500th and 502nd meetings, on 29 February, 1 and 2 March 2000. It had before it the following documents:

(a) Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the World Bank on measures to improve the effectiveness of the International Comparison Programme (ICP) (E/CN.3/2000/7);

(b) A background document prepared by Eurostat entitled "Quality improvement in the calculation of the purchasing power parities (PPPs): proposals from Eurostat".

Action taken by the Commission

12. The Commission:

(a) Noted the support of many countries and international agencies for a viable ICP programme;

(b) Noted with approval the efforts made by the international and supranational agencies to address the reservations in their elements of the ICP programme;

(c) However, in the light of the serious reservations noted regarding the quality, timeliness, credibility and transparency of the International Comparison Programme as identified in the Castles and Ryten reports, recommended that the start of the next round of the global ICP be postponed by at least one year so that the following steps could be taken:

(i) Securing of adequate funding for the programme;

(ii) Instituting an adequate management structure at both the global and regional levels;

(iii) Developing an agreed practical implementation plan which is initially limited to the calculation of purchasing power parities for private household consumption expenditure;

(iv) Building country capability as an integral component of ICP.

(d) Empowered the Chairman to constitute a group of friends to review the implementation plan and to report back no later than at the next meeting of the Commission.

F. Special Data Dissemination Standard and General Data Dissemination System of the International Monetary Fund, including data quality

13. The Commission considered item 3 (f) of its agenda at its 500th meeting, on 1 March 2000. It had before it the following documents:

(a) Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report prepared by the International Monetary Fund on the Special Data Dissemination Standard (SDDS) and the General Data Dissemination System (GDDS), and issues of data quality (E/CN.3/2000/8);

(b) Background note by the International Monetary Fund on the reference site for data quality on the IMF Dissemination Standards Bulletin Board.

Action taken by the Commission

14. The Commission:

(a) Welcomed the positive response of the Statistics Department of IMF to the request made by the Statistical Commission at its previous session to enhance the process of consultation, in particular the arrangement to send papers about the data dissemination standards intended for discussion by its Executive Board directly to national statistical agencies. It re-emphasized the importance of early

involvement of the national statistical agencies in the further development of SDDS and GDDS since they were the ultimate providers of much of the information;

(b) Stressed that for the successful implementation of the dissemination standards, effective partnerships at the national level between the statistical agencies and the central banks and ministries of finance were needed. It noted that such partnerships had indeed been formed as a result of the data standards initiative, and it urged IMF to reinforce such partnerships;

(c) Acknowledged that SDDS had contributed to the improvement of data in the economic and financial area. However, it also noted that there was an opportunity cost in terms of the further development of other data systems. The Commission expressed its concern about the planned extension of SDDS. It stressed the need for priorities and for a certain degree of flexibility, such as through extended transition periods, when implementing the standards;

(d) Welcomed the debate on data quality that IMF had stimulated. It invited IMF to build on existing experiences and expertise in the regions and in countries. Noting the trade-off between data quality and other data characteristics, such as timeliness, the Commission asked IMF to take the outcomes of the data quality debate into account when reviewing SDDS in the future;

(e) Stressed the importance of a continuous dialogue between producers of statistics and policy makers, which SDDS and GDDS had stimulated;

(f) Agreed on the need for further capacity-building and resources for the implementation of the standards. It welcomed the intention of IMF to integrate GDDS into the regular technical cooperation programme of its Statistics Department.

G. Other economic statistics (city groups on economic statistics and Intersecretariat Working Group on Price Statistics)

15. The Commission considered item 3 (g) of its agenda at its 500th meeting, on 1 March 2000. It had before it the following documents:

(a) Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the city groups (E/CN.3/2000/9 and Add.1);

(b) Note by the Secretary-General transmitting a note prepared by the International Labour Organization on the Intersecretariat Working Group on Price Statistics (E/CN.3/2000/10);

(c) Background note by the Canberra Group on Household Income Statistics.

Action taken by the Commission

16. The Commission:

(a) Stressed again the importance of making information about the city groups widely available. In particular, it encouraged the city groups to publish on the Internet the documents that they produced;

(b) Welcomed the progress that all the city groups and the Intersecretariat Working Group on Price Statistics have made in their work;

(c) Suggested that the Ottawa Group may want to consider the implications of the increase in e-commerce on price indicators;

(d) Welcomed the efforts of the Intersecretariat Working Group on Price Statistics to revise the ILO *Manual on Consumer Price Indices*. It encouraged the inclusion in the *Manual* of technical guidelines for implementation;

(e) Noted the proposed focus of the Voorburg Group on Services Statistics on price indexes for services, producer price indices and statistical issues concerning the information and communication technology sector. Regarding producer price indices, it encouraged the Voorburg Group to continue to cooperate with the Ottawa Group on Price Indexes and with the Intersecretariat Working Group on Price Statistics. The Commission invited the Voorburg Group to address the difficulties that developing countries encountered when attempting to collect data on the increasingly significant services sector;

(f) Noted that the work on intangible assets and the information economy would continue in the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), but decided that such work should no longer be reported to the Commission under the city group agenda item.

Chapter III

Tourism satellite account

17. The Commission considered item 4 of its agenda at its 501st meeting, on 1 March 2000. It had before it the following documents:

(a) Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the World Tourism Organization on the tourism satellite account and related methodological outputs (E/CN.3/2000/11);

(b) Draft tourism satellite account: methodological references (PROV/ST/ESA/STAT/SER.F/80);

(c) Draft update of the United Nations and World Tourism Organization recommendations on tourism statistics, including the draft provisional list of tourism-specific products (PROV/ST/ESA/STAT/SER.M/83/Rev.1);

(d) Background document containing proposed amendments to the draft methodological references to the tourism satellite account prepared by WTO, OECD and Eurostat;

(e) Background document containing general comments in relation to the draft update of the United Nations and WTO recommendations on tourism statistics, including the draft provisional list of tourism-specific products, prepared by OECD and Eurostat;

(f) Background document containing the comments of the United States on the recommendations on tourism statistics and on the draft methodological references.

Action taken by the Commission

18. The Commission:

(a) Adopted the methodological references to the draft tourism satellite account, as modified by the background document listed in paragraph 17 (d) above and as modified by the consultations between WTO and the United States and their agreed text on the issues raised in the background document (listed in para. 17 (f)) above;

(b) Requested the secretariats of the organizations involved (WTO, OECD, Eurostat) to (i) make the approved changes and any necessary editing changes, and (ii) include the list of tourism-specific products contained in part III of the draft update of the United Nations/WTO recommendations on tourism statistics, including the draft provisional list of tourism-specific products (PROV/ST/ESA/STAT/SER.M/83/Rev.1) (see para. 18 (c) below), in March 2000, and to publish the document in cooperation with the United Nations Statistics Division as soon as possible;

(c) Welcomed the draft update of the United Nations/WTO recommendations on tourism statistics, reflecting changes necessary for consistency with the tourism satellite account, the 1993 SNA and the fifth edition of the IMF *Balance of Payments*, including the list of tourism-specific products contained in part III of the draft update, but deferred its detailed consideration pending further consultations and review by WTO;

(d) Requested WTO, OECD and Eurostat to continue their cooperation in this field, and to provide consistent technical advice and data requests to countries;

(e) Welcomed an offer from the International Labour Organization (ILO) to present to the Commission at its thirty-second session, in 2001, a report on its work on developing a labour statistics supplement to the tourism satellite account.

Chapter IV

Environment statistics

19. The Commission considered item 5 of its agenda at its 501st meeting, on 1 March 2000. It had before it a note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the London Group on Environmental Accounting (E/CN.3/2000/12).

Action taken by the Commission

20. The Commission:

(a) Approved the proposed revision process of the System of Integrated Environmental and Economic Accounting and the schedule of activities outlined in the report (except as indicated in paragraph 20 (c) and (e) below);

(b) Welcomed the proposed extensive consultation process with the broader international community during the revision process;

(c) Noted that the expert group meeting mentioned in the report is no longer necessary. It welcomed the proposal of the United Nations Statistics Division that the London Group invite developing countries, ensuring regional representation, to its next meeting, which will take place in October 2000 in the Netherlands. The Division offered to provide financial support to attend the meeting for five developing countries;

(d) Recommended that the United Nations Statistics Division transmit the report of the October 2000 meeting of the London Group on Environmental Accounting to members of the Statistical Commission;

(e) Recommended that the handbook on integrated environmental and economic accounting be submitted to the Statistical Commission for its approval at its thirty-second session in 2001, while noting that due to time constraints the document would be available in English only.

Chapter V

Demographic, social and migration statistics

A. Gender issues in measurement of paid and unpaid work

21. The Commission considered item 6 (a) of its agenda at its 501st meeting, on 1 March 2000. It had before it the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation plan of a project on gender issues in the measurement of paid and unpaid work (E/CN.3/2000/13).

Action taken by the Commission

22. The Commission recognized the importance of the work on the measurement of paid and unpaid work by the Secretariat as set out in the report, and noted additional related work being carried out by various countries and agencies, particularly on time-use surveys.

B. Social statistics

23. The Commission considered item 6 (b) of its agenda at its 501st meeting, on 1 March 2000. It had before it a note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Siena Group for Social Statistics (E/CN.3/2000/14).

Action taken by the Commission

24. The Commission took note of the report.

C. Measurement of human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome

25. The Commission considered item 6 (c) of its agenda at its 501st meeting, on 1 March 2000. The Chairman made an introductory statement on the difficulties of measuring the impact of human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS).

26. The representatives of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), India, and the ILO made statements about the need to develop methodology to measure the impact of HIV/AIDS in society.

Chapter VI

Coordination of development indicators in the context of the follow-up to United Nations conferences and summits, including capacity-building

27. The Commission considered item 7 of its agenda at its 501st meeting, on 1 March 2000. It had before it the following documents:

(a) Report of the Secretary-General on the harmonization and rationalization of development indicators in the United Nations system (E/CN.3/2000/15);

(b) Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Rio Group on Poverty Statistics (E/CN.3/2000/16);

(c) Excerpts of Council resolution 1999/55 (section II, "Basic indicators for the integrated and coordinated implementation and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits");

(d) Report of the Secretary-General entitled "Integrated and coordinated implementation and follow-up of major United Nations conferences and summits: a critical review of the development of indicators in the context of conference follow-up" (E/1999/11);

(e) Summary by the President of the Economic and Social Council of an informal meeting of the Council on basic indicators for the integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the major United Nations conferences and summits (New York, 10-11 May 1999) (E/1999/77);

(f) Background note prepared by the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) on statistics and indicators for social progress;

(g) Background note prepared by the Rio Group on Poverty Statistics containing a preliminary report on its third meeting.

Action taken by the Commission

28. The Commission:

(a) Expressed support for the Secretariat's effort towards harmonization and rationalization of basic indicators. It reiterated the need to lessen the reporting burden of countries by reducing the number of data requests sent by international organizations;

(b) Stressed the importance of coordination among and also within international organizations and of statistical capacity-building. It noted the launching of the PARIS 21 initiative. The Commission also noted that unless the necessary resources for capacity-building were made available, it would not be possible to meet the demands for data made by policy makers;

(c) Noted with satisfaction the work undertaken by the Rio Group on Poverty Statistics;

(d) Expressed support for the Economic Commission for Europe initiative to strengthen capacity-building in social statistics in connection with the forthcoming special session of the General Assembly on the five-year review of the World Summit for Social Development, to be held at Geneva in 2000;

(e) Noted the concerns expressed by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) Working Group of Statistical Experts regarding the length of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF)-common country assessments development indicator list.

Chapter VII

International economic and social classifications

29. The Commission considered item 8 of its agenda at its 501st and 502nd meetings, on 1 and 2 March 2000. It had before it the following documents:

(a) Report of the Secretary-General on international economic and social classifications (E/CN.3/2000/17);

(b) Background document entitled "International work on industry classification: What are the priorities?".

Action taken by the Commission

30. The Commission:

(a) Endorsed the recommendations for future work on the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC), as outlined in the report of the Expert Group on International Economic and Social Classifications and in the report;

(b) Noted that the concerns raised regarding the appropriate level of detail of an international classification were determined by the need to allow for international comparison at aggregated levels as well as the need for detailed development of national classifications; the Commission also noted that a two-digit ISIC with regional adaptations could possibly serve these needs, and referred the matter to the Expert Group for further consideration;

(c) Recommended that the definition and use of alternate aggregations in ISIC receive more attention as a way to satisfy analytical needs of users;

(d) Emphasized the need for training materials, and noted the already existing support of member countries in this field;

(e) Noted that during the revision process of ISIC, more attention should be given to the definition and use of statistical units and the definition of core units as building blocks;

(f) Noted the ongoing efforts of the United Nations Statistics Division to make crucial information and materials available, such as provisional indices, using the Internet;

(g) Noted that although currently focused on economic classifications, the Expert Group would also bring items relating to social classifications to the attention of the Commission.

Chapter VIII

Revised Handbook of Statistical Organization

31. The Commission considered item 9 of its agenda at its 502nd meeting, on 2 March 2000. The Director of the United Nations Statistics Division made a statement on the revision of the handbook of statistical organization.

Action taken by the Commission

32. The Commission noted that the consultant had prepared the draft handbook by the due date, and that the revised version would be available in September 2000 with a view to approval by the Statistical Commission in 2001.

Chapter IX

Review of other major developments in the work programme of the United Nations Statistics Division

33. The Commission considered items 10 and 13 of its agenda at its 502nd meeting, on 2 March 2000. It had before it the following documents:

(a) Note by the Secretariat on the draft medium-term plan of the United Nations Statistics Division for the period 2002-2005 (E/CN.3/2000/CRP.1);

(b) List of expert group meetings and workshops to be held by the United Nations Statistics Division in 2000 and 2001 (E/CN.3/2000/L.4);

(c) Organizational chart of the Division;

(d) Proposed programme budget of the Division for the biennium 2000-2001;

(e) Projects to be funded from the resources proposed under section 33 (Development account) of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001 (extracts from documents A/53/374/Add.1 and A/54/__).

Action taken by the Commission

34. The Commission took note of the draft medium-term plan, the work programme of the United Nations Statistics Division, the proposed schedule of expert groups and workshops, and the activities to be undertaken under the Development Account.

Chapter X

Coordination and integration of international statistical programmes

35. The Commission considered item 11 of its agenda at its 502nd meeting, on 2 March 2000. It had before it the following documents:

(a) Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the ACC Subcommittee on Statistical Activities on its thirty-third session (E/CN.3/2000/19);

(b) Report of the Secretary-General on the global integrated presentation of the work of the international organizations in statistical methodology (E/CN.3/2000/20).

Action taken by the Commission

36. The Commission:

(a) Noted that the work and views of the ACC Subcommittee on Statistical Activities had been reflected under several agenda items of the session, namely items 3-5, 7, 9 and 14;

(b) Took note of the progress made in the global integrated presentation of the work of the international organizations in statistical methodology, and considered that the results of this work would be very useful to a spectrum of users and in developing a multi-year programme of international work for the Statistical Commission;

(c) Welcomed the cooperative and supportive action that had been taken by ECE, OECD and Eurostat in the context of the Conference of European Statisticians integrated presentation of statistical work in that region, recognizing the substantial amount of work involved in this process.

Chapter XI

Follow-up to the agreed conclusions of the Economic and Social Council's high-level and coordination segments, and to its resolutions

37. The Commission considered item 12 of its agenda at its 502nd meeting, on 2 March 2000. It had before it a background note summarizing Economic and Social Council resolutions that were relevant to the work of the Statistical Commission, and the actions taken or planned by the Commission and its Bureau. The relevant resolutions are Council resolutions 1999/1 on the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields, 1999/8 on the functioning of the Statistical Commission, 1999/17 on the agreed conclusions of the Commission on the Status of Women on critical areas of concern identified in the Beijing Platform for Action, 1999/35 on the implementation of agreed conclusions 1998/2 of the Economic and Social Council on the coordinated follow-up to and implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, 1999/51 on the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields and cooperation between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions, 1999/55 on the integrated and coordinated implementation of the follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits, 1999/57 on the report of the Committee for Programme and Coordination on the work of its thirty-ninth session and 1999/223 on the report of the Statistical Commission on its thirtieth session and provisional agenda and documentation for the thirty-first session of the Commission.

Action taken by the Commission

38. The Commission agreed to bring to the attention of the Economic and Social Council the following actions that had been taken or were planned consistent with Council requests:

(a) At its thirty-first session, the Commission had included in its agenda:

(i) An item entitled "Gender issues in measurement of paid and unpaid work";

(ii) A paper showing the relationships between the Commission agenda items and other functional commissions and events;

(iii) The draft multi-year work programme covering the period 2000-2003;

(iv) The standing item to follow up agreed conclusions, resolutions and decisions of the Council;

(v) An item entitled "Coordination of development indicators in the context of follow-up to United Nations conferences and summits, including capacity-building". The harmonization and rationalization of development indicators is a principal objective of that work;

(vi) The draft medium-term plan 2002-2005 of the United Nations Statistics Division;

(b) The Bureau of the Statistical Commission will review the Statistical Commission documents at the Bureau meeting after the conclusion of the thirty-first session of the Commission and ensure that they are transmitted to other functional commissions, as appropriate;

(c) It is the normal practice of the Commission to try to ensure continuity in electing its Bureau. The Chairman continues on the Bureau after his or her Chairmanship concludes; a member of the previous Bureau is generally elected Chairman at the subsequent session;

(d) There is significant cooperation between the United Nations Statistics Division and the Bretton Woods organizations; the organizations participate fully in the work of the Statistical Commission, task forces, expert groups on statistical issues and the ACC Subcommittee on Statistical Activities;

(e) The special needs of African and least developed countries are considered in the implementation of Statistical Commission programmes. Special agenda items have been included in previous Commission sessions.

Chapter XII

Programme questions and related matters

39. The Commission considered items 10 and 13 of its agenda at its 502nd meeting, on 2 March 2000 (for consideration of and action taken under this item, see chap. IX).

Chapter XIII

United Nations Development Programme Human Development Report

40. The Commission considered item 14 of its agenda at its 502nd and 503rd sessions, on 2 and 3 March 2000. It had before it the following background documents:

(a) A paper on the *Human Development Report 1997*, prepared by I. Castles, Vice-President of the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia;

(b) A paper entitled "Measurement of nations: a review essay on the *Human Development Report 1998*", prepared by I. Castles and published in *Population and Development Review*, vol. 24, No. 4 (December 1998).

41. The representative of Australia made an introductory statement.

Action taken by the Commission

42. The Commission adopted the following text:

> "Without being able to directly verify the findings of Ian Castles of Australia during its thirty-first session, the Statistical Commission took note of his report on the *Human Development Report*. The Commission is very concerned to ensure that the *Report* is based on valid statistical evidence. The Commission, therefore, requests its Chairman to appoint a small group of statistical experts to prepare, in conjunction with the United Nations Development Programme, a report on the accuracy of the statistical information contained in the *Report*, focusing on the points raised by the room document authored by Mr. Castles. The Group should report to the Bureau not later than June 2000. The Commission authorizes the Bureau to take whatever follow-up steps it deems necessary."

Chapter XIV

Provisional agenda and dates for the thirty-second session of the Commission

43. The Commission considered item 15 of its agenda at its 503rd meeting, on 3 March 2000. It had before it the following documents:

(a) Note by the Secretariat containing the draft provisional agenda for its thirty-second session (E/CN.3/2000/L.3);

(b) Note by the Secretariat containing proposals for a multi-year programme of work (E/CN.3/2000/L.3/Add.1).

44. At the same meeting, a senior official of the United Nations Statistics Division made a statement and circulated an informal note containing amendments to document E/CN.3/2000/L.3.

Action taken by the Commission

45. The Commission:

(a) Approved the provisional agenda and documentation for its thirty-second session, as amended (see chap. I, sect. A), subject to review and finalization by the Bureau;

(b) Noted the proposals for a multi-year programme of work for 2000-2003 and the range of observations that members and observers made as a guide to future work of the Commission. The Commission requested the Secretariat to send a summary of the discussion to members and observers of the Commission for further comment, and requested the Bureau to further refine the proposals in the light of the views expressed and comments made;

(c) Recommended that its thirty-second session be held in New York from 6 to 9 March 2001, and also noted the possibility of holding the session from 27 February to 2 March or from 13 to 16 March 2001, subject to the availability of conference facilities.

Chapter XV

Adoption of the report of the Commission on its thirty-first session

46. At its 503rd meeting, on 3 March 2000, the draft report of the Commission, as contained in documents E/CN.3/2000/L.2 and Add.1, and a number of draft texts in English only, were introduced by the Rapporteur.

Action taken by the Commission

47. The Commission adopted the draft report as contained in documents E/CN.3/2000/L.2 and Add.1, as well as a number of draft texts in English only, and entrusted the Rapporteur, in conjunction with the Secretariat, to finalize the report.

Chapter XVI

Organization of the session

A. Opening and duration of the session

48. The Statistical Commission held its thirty-first session at United Nations Headquarters from 29 February to 3 March 2000. The Commission held 6 meetings (498th to 503rd).

49. The session was opened by the temporary Chairman, Guest Charumbira (Botswana).

B. Attendance

50. The session was attended by 24 States members of the Commission. Observers for other States Members of the United Nations and a non-member State, representatives of organizations of the United Nations system and observers for intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations also attended. The list of participants is contained in annex I.

C. Election of officers

51. At its 498th meeting, on 29 February, the Commission elected the following officers, by acclamation:

Chairman:

Guest **Charumbira** (Botswana)

Vice-Chairmen:

Fitz-Albert **Russell** (Jamaica)
Victor **Dinculescu** (Romania)
Katherine **Wallman** (United States of America)

Rapporteur:

Masahiro **Horie** (Japan)

D. Agenda and organization of work

52. At the 498th meeting on 29 February, the Commission adopted the provisional agenda contained in document E/CN.3/2000/1, as orally amended, as follows:

1. Election of officers.
2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.
3. Economic statistics:
   (a) National accounts;
   (b) International trade statistics;
   (c) Service statistics;

(d) Finance statistics;

(e) International Comparison Programme;

(f) Special Data Dissemination Standard and General Data Dissemination System of the International Monetary Fund, including data quality;

(g) Other economic statistics (city groups on economic statistics and Intersecretariat Working Group on Price Statistics);

4. Tourism satellite account.

5. Environment statistics.

6. Demographic, social and migration statistics:

(a) Gender issues in measurement of paid and unpaid work;

(b) Social statistics;

(c) Statistics of HIV/AIDS.

7. Coordination of development indicators in the context of follow-up to United Nations conferences and summits, including capacity-building.

8. International economic and social classifications.

9. Revised *Handbook of Statistical Organization*.

10. Review of other major developments in the work programme of the United Nations Statistics Division.

11. Coordination and integration of international statistical programmes.

12. Follow-up to the agreed conclusions of the Economic and Social Council's high-level and coordination segments, and to its resolutions.

13. Programme questions and related matters.

14. United Nations Development Programme *Human Development Report*.

15. Provisional agenda and dates for the thirty-second session of the Commission.

16. Report of the Commission on its thirty-first session.

53. At the same meeting, the Commission approved the organization of the work of the session, as orally revised (E/CN.3/2000/L.1).

E. Documentation

54. The list of documents before the Commission at its thirty-first session is contained in annex II.

Annex I

Attendance

Members

Argentina	S. Goldberg
Australia	W. McLennan, B. Dunlop, R. Edwards, D. Trewin, B. Driscoll
Botswana	G. M. Charumbira, A. N. Majelantle
China	Zhu Zhixin, Fung Xing-Wang, Li Qiang, Zheng Jingping, Du Weiqun
Côte d'Ivoire	Claude Bouah-Kamon, Alassane Sogodogo, Gaston Yao
Czech Republic	Marie Bohata, Zdenek Vesely
Germany	Martin Lutz, Heinrich Lutzel, Christian Schleithoff, Ruth Wiesebach
Hungary	Tamas Mellar, Katalin Kiss Postane, Sandor Mozes
Iceland	Hallgrimur Snorrason
India	N. S. Sastry
Jamaica	Fitz-Albert Russell
Japan	Masahiro Horie, Takao Ito, Michiko Yamashita, Kozo Yamada, Kiyohiko Utsunomiya, Hideki Kubo, Kazumi Wada, Tatsuya Ishii, Katsuhiko Shinjo
Mexico	Miguel Cervera Flores, Francisco Guillen, Enrique Ordaz
Morocco	M. Abzahd, H. Fizazi
Netherlands	H. K. van Tuinen, R. P. M. Luttikhuizen, Pieter Dorst, Luc Schilling
Pakistan	Fazlullah Qureshi
Peru	Manuel Picasso, Felix Fernando Murillo Alfaro, Carlos Augusto Carre Rodriguez, Alberto Padilla Trajo, Augusto Cabrera
Portugal	Nuno Brito, Catulina Guerreira, Lidia Barreiros
Romania	Victor Dinculescu, Radu Felician Halus, Ovidiu Ierulescu
Russian Federation	V. L. Sokolin, N. V. Tchulkov, B. S. Avramenko, A. E. Kossarev, I. O. Gribok, V. V. Erufeev
Tunisia	Khalifa Ben Fekih
Uganda	Emmanuel K. Sekatawa

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	T. Holt
United States of America	Katherine K. Wallman, Suzann Evinger, J. Steven Landefeld, Rosemary Marcuss, Katrina Reut, Richard F. Williams

States Members of the United Nations represented by observers

Algeria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Croatia, Cuba, Estonia, Finland, France, Greece, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Italy, Jordan, Lithuania, Mongolia, Nigeria, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Republic of Korea, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Spain, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Ukraine

Non-member States represented by observers

Holy See, Switzerland

Entities maintaining permanent observer missions at the United Nations

Palestine

United Nations bodies

United Nations Children's Fund, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Population Fund, United Nations Centre for Human Settlements, Economic Commission for Africa, Economic Commission for Europe, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

Specialized agencies and related organizations

International Labour Organization, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, World Bank, International Monetary Fund, United Nations Industrial Development Organization, World Trade Organization

Intergovernmental organizations

Commonwealth of Independent States, African Development Bank, Asian Development Bank Conference of European Statisticians, ESCAP Committee on Statistics, Inter-American Development Bank, Observatoire économique et statistique d'Afrique subsaharienne, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, Organization of the Islamic Conference, Pan American Health Organization, Statistical Office of the European Communities, World Tourism Organization

Non-governmental organizations

International Statistical Institute

Annex II

List of documents

Document symbol	*Agenda item*	*Title or description*
E/CN.3/2000/1	2	Provisional agenda and annotations
E/CN.3/2000/2	3(a)	Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Task Force on National Accounts
E/CN.3/2000/3	3(a)	Report of the Secretary-General on the milestone assessment of the implementation of the System of National Accounts, 1993, by member States
E/CN.3/2000/4	3(b)	Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Task Force on International Trade Statistics
E/CN.3/2000/5	3(c)	Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Task Force on Statistics of International Trade in Services
E/CN.3/2000/6	3(d)	Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Task Force on Finance Statistics
E/CN.3/2000/7	3(e)	Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the World Bank on measures to improve the effectiveness of the International Comparison Programme
E/CN.3/2000/8	3(f)	Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the International Monetary Fund on the Special Data Dissemination Standard and the General Data Dissemination System, and issues of data quality
E/CN.3/2000/9	3(g)	Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the city groups
E/CN.3/2000/9/Add.1		Addendum: Report of the Group of Experts on Intangibles
E/CN.3/2000/10	3(g)	Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Intersecretariat Working Group on Price Statistics
E/CN.3/2000/11	4	Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the World Tourism Organization on the tourism satellite account and related methodological outputs
E/CN.3/2000/12	5	Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the London Croup on Environmental Accounting
E/CN.3/2000/13	6(a)	Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation plan of a project on gender issues in the measurement of paid and unpaid work
E/CN.3/2000/14	6(b)	Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Siena Group for Social Statistics
E/CN.3/2000/15	7	Report of the Secretary-General on harmonization and rationalization of development indicators in

Document symbol	*Agenda item*	*Title or description*
		the United Nations system
E/CN.3/2000/16	7	Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Rio Group on Poverty Statistics
E/CN.3/2000/17	8	Report of the Secretary-General on international economic and social classifications
E/CN.3/2000/18	-	Not issued
E/CN.3/2000/19	3, 5, 7, 9 and 11	Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the ACC Subcommittee on Statistical Activities on its thirty-third session
E/CN.3/2000/20	11	Report of the Secretary-General on the global integrated presentation of the work of the international organizations in statistical methodology
E/CN.3/1999/CRP.1	13	Note by the Secretariat on the draft medium-term plan of the United Nations Statistics Division for the period 2002-2005
E/CN.3/2000/L.1	2	Organization of the work of the Session
E/CN.3/2000/L.2 and Add.1	16	Draft report of the Commission
E/CN.3/2000/L.3	15	Note by the Secretariat containing the provisional agenda and dates for the thirty-second session of the Commission
E/CN.3/2000/L.3/Add.1	15	Note by the Secretariat on proposals for a multi-year programme of work
E/CN.3/2000/L.4	10, 13	List of expert group meetings and workshops to be held by the United Nations Statistics Division in 2000 and 2001
PROV/ST/ESA/STAT/SER.M/83/Rev.1	4	Draft update of the United Nations and World Tourism Organization recommendations on tourism statistics, including the draft provisional list of tourism-specific products
PROV/ST/ESA/STAT/SER.F/80	4	Draft tourism satellite account: methodological references

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